



Partners in Care & Bridging the Gap

Supporters rally for affordable housing, homelessness services

For Immediate Release

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HONOLULU — A broad range of community members gathered today at the State Capitol to voice unified support for legislative action on truly affordable housing and core homelessness services.

Housing and Homelessness Unity Day featured a walk-around the State Capitol in which supporters visited legislators with a copy of a Honolulu Star-Advertiser op-ed titled “Major investment needed for housing” that was published on Feb. 3; and a sign-on letter containing the support of 111 people from more than 90 organizations, agencies and churches. Many supporters belonged to Hawai‘i’s two Continua of Care, Partners in Care (PIC) and Bridging the Gap (BTG), which consist of stakeholders including homelessness service providers, health care organizations and business leaders. Other supporters included members of Hawai‘i’s faith-based community, as well as the four Hawai‘i counties and the State of Hawai‘i.

“The op-ed that inspired the rally said that Hawai‘i’s “housing crisis” has persisted for almost 50 years,” said Connie Mitchell, the executive chair of Partners in Care and the executive director of the Institute for Human Services. “We are way past the boiling point of this crisis. Homelessness is the symptom. Housing is the answer ... and we need action NOW.”

“Across the state, thousands of people are suffering on the streets, or teetering on brink of homelessness. Basic services like outreach, assessment centers, mental health treatment, and programs that quickly get people into housing, are critical investments for reducing homelessness,” said Brandee Menino, the chair of Bridging the Gap and executive director of Hope Services Hawaii. “These programs work, and it’s time to add them to the base budget.”

The sign-on letter that was sent around to legislators called for:

- Sustained annual commitments for truly affordable housing, including targeted housing for the chronically homeless;
- Sustained annual commitments for core homelessness services that work (such as Housing First) to ensure their long-term viability and success; and
- Changes to mental health laws, ensuring that people incapacitated by mental illness and suffering on the streets are connected with the help they need.

About Bridging the Gap

Bridging the Gap is rural Hawai'i's Continuum of Care (CoC). Bridging the Gap was designed to promote community wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness, provide funding for efforts by nonprofit providers, and allow state and local governments to quickly rehouse homeless individuals and families, while minimizing the trauma of dislocation. Bridging the Gap promotes access to mainstream programs and optimizes self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

About Partners in Care

Partners in Care (PIC) O'ahu's Continuum of Care (CoC). PIC is a coalition composed of homeless service providers, government representatives and community stakeholders with a mission to eliminate homelessness through open and inclusive participation and the coordination of integrated responses. PIC is a planning, coordinating and advocacy alliance that develops recommendations for programs and services to fill needs within O'ahu's Continuum of Care of homeless persons. For more information about PIC, please visit www.partnersincareoahu.org.

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